



## **Southwest Coordinating Group**



**February 23, 2004**

## **2004 Wildland Fire Season Memorandum**

**Directed to:** Dugger Hughes, SWCC Coordinator

**From:** Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

**Topic/Issue:** **Three Tier Dispatch/Coordination Study**

The Southwest Coordinating Group requests that you lead a working team to study the opportunity for three tier dispatch in the Southwest Geographical Area. The criteria for the study are set forth below.

Background: After South Canyon incident in 1994, the IRMT identified three tier dispatch as a issue of effectiveness of the coordination /dispatch system. As a result a National recommendation was to move t a three tier system. USDI-BLM was directed to move to three tier system as soon as practical. In 2002 Lessons Learned Study of the SW Fire Season for the SWAREC recommended that the Southwest move to three tier for efficiency and safety. The SWAREC assigned the task of review and recommendations for moving the Southwest Geographical area to three tier dispatch. Fall of 2003 a preliminary study group developed some key issues and points to consider for the development of a proposal outline for a future working group to focus upon.

Scope of Study: For this study three tier coordination/dispatch is defined as follows: Three levels of dispatch from the incident to the National Coordination Center; i.e. 1) incident to dispatch center, 2) dispatch center to geographical area coordination center, 3) geographical area coordination center to national coordination center. A dispatch center may have single resource responsibility, may be co-located with one or more agencies, or may be totally interagency integrated. A Fire Planning Unit may have one or may have multiple dispatch centers.

Study Method: Examine the following and make recommendations:

1. Present current situation in Southwest GACC.
  - A. Current workload for dispatch and resource orders at SWGACC
  - B. Current workload for dispatch and resource orders at each zone
    1. Current political or administrative boundaries for each zone
    2. Current fire and administrative dispatch levels for each agency in each zone as represented by numbers of fires or resource numbers and volume of dispatch communication traffic
  - C. Identify present level of dispatch within each zone by location and area served
2. Propose future three tier system for Southwest
  - A. Identify workload change for GACC and centers
  - B. Proposed logical political or administrative boundaries for coordination/dispatch centers either as or within Fire Management Planning Units

- C. Estimate of the Agencies involved or not involved for each center's area
  - D. Recommend most logical three tier dispatch system if a perfect world with available technology regardless of budget, FTE, Politics
  - E. Staffing and Budget estimation needed to implement and then operate
3. Based upon number 2. above, what are the present physical, political, FTE, Budget, etc. barriers to implement.
- A. How to ensure cross dispatch sharing of information between centers on incidents
  - B. Display issues with overlapping coverage in proposal and resolutions
  - C. Give SWCG candid opinion where inefficiencies exist today
  - D. What will be the results of zones versus centers in Fire Planning Units
4. Recommendation from this work group to SWCG/SWA REC as to a practical move to three tier in the Southwest
- A. Timeline
  - B. Barriers to overcome
  - C. Other issues or considerations to be resolved before proposal could be implemented

It is proposed that this work group complete the task by June 1, 2004 or a date that is agreed upon once the task is initiated.

It is proposed that you may select the task group, it is our recommendation that it includes a dispatcher or zone manager, an FMO, a Agency Administrator, and State or local agency representative.

/s/ William C. Waterbury

William C. Waterbury, 2004-2005 Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

cc. NICC, Alice Forbes